

## **Waste Collection Companies Meeting October 7, 2004**

**Companies with Attendees:** AAA, Potomac Disposal Service, American Disposal, McLean Trash, Reston Trash, Virginia Trash, 1-800-Got Junk, Con-Serv Industries, Five Star, Champion Services, and Capitol Services

**County staff:** Joyce Doughty, Jeff Smithberger, Randy Hancock, John Childress, Linda Boone

The meeting began at 5:00 p.m.

### Introductions

Joyce Doughty mentioned how much she appreciated so many collection companies attending.

### County Announcements and Updates

- Collection company contact information. It would be very helpful if collection companies kept County staff updated about phone numbers and email addresses. County staff has several ways of disseminating information and wants to have the most current collection company information. Monthly newsletters and information about disposal/recycling events can be emailed if companies will keep staff informed of email addresses, FAX numbers or phone number changes.
- Tornado update. County trucks have been collecting debris from the tornado in the Pleasant Valley community. There have been 2 collection weekends and the final one is scheduled for October 9. The County Executive authorized County collection staff to be involved in the clean-up.
- Cold Iron Outage. This outage is required once every 5 years to maintain things that are never shutdown in the Energy/Resource Recovery Facility. Cooling towers needed work this year. The County has cut-off waste from Prince William County since early September and has been diverting other waste downstate. Prince William waste is cutoff until the end of October. There will be two more routine outages in November. Joyce advised all to plan on November 1 for Prince William County waste to come back into the E/RRF.
- VDEQ meetings. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality is initiating outreach meetings in the community.
- Hazardous waste. There will be increased emphasis on hazardous waste and its proper collection and disposal. Customers need to be informed of what they can dispose. For example, painting companies and body shops will have increased emphasis on what is allowed and what is not.

- Hauler News. Companies were reminded that the Hauler News newsletter is printed monthly and enclosed with the disposal bill from the County. A copy can be emailed also, if staff has the company's email address. Important and timely information is published in the newsletter.
- Recycle America Day is celebrated on November 13. Please help the County publicize this and other events. Electronics are recycled at many of these events.

Q: Can electronics recycling be done easily by adding a container at the Drop-Off Centers?

A: No, care must be taken not to drop the computers or break the monitors. A staffed site is needed to ensure the electronics are properly handled so they can be safely disposed.

A suggestion was made that the County may want to locate electronics recycling containers at I-66 or I-95 locations. Staff noted that most customers who donate electronics want to get the tax right-off for the donation of the equipment via Service Source.

- Hazardous waste. The County plans to hold the hazardous waste (CESQG) events quarterly next year. The County will announce the dates early so that collection companies will have time to notify their customers of upcoming events. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality will not allow the County to accept business waste at the Household Hazardous Waste sites. Is there a better time to hold the events, or a better way to publicize the events? Maybe the event dates could be added to collection bills so that customers can plan for events. Residents need to be aware of how to properly dispose of hazardous material. Collection companies can refer customers to the County's website for info and requirements for business recycling.

#### Update on the Solid Waste Task Force (SWTF)

The Task Force wants to work together with the collection companies to resolve issues. There are 16 members on the Task Force and their activities are published on the County's webpage at: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/swtf](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/swtf). Copies of the main page of website were distributed to show attendees the layout of the site.

The issues raised at the public hearing on May 10, 2004, and other issues identified by the Board of Supervisors have been placed in 3 categories -- environmental, customer service, and operational issues. At the last Task Force meeting another category of communications was added. The Task Force will be meeting at the Group Decision Support Center (GDSC) for the next several meetings. Meeting minutes are on the website and the next meeting will be held on October 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the GDSC, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Pennino Building.

- Environmental issues. Paper versus plastic bags for yard waste collection was the environmental issue that generated the most discussion within the SWTF. The composting facilities do not want “overs” ( roughly 25% of the material collected). Overs result during the debagging process when plastic bags tangle with brush and twigs and then are caught in the debagging machine. At this time the Task Force does not want to recommend a ban on plastic bags but strongly wants to encourage residents to use paper bags for yard waste collection.

Q: Are open containers better?

A: Yes, but homeowners may need many of them to accommodate leaves.

The County’s website is changing to encourage paper or trash cans for the collection of yard waste. If the compost facility bans plastic bags, then the County may need to change this policy.

Removal of additional amounts of NiCad batteries from the waste stream is another significant environmental recommendation.

- Customer Service issues. The number of County customers is increasing due mainly to in-fill development not new sanitary district petitions.

Q: How many households were involved in the last sanitary district process?

A: In July, 80 customers were added. In January 2005 , service will begin for 52 customers currently requesting County service.

Q: What percent of people currently in sanitary districts want to be there, many do not want to be?

A: There is no real answer to that question.

Q: What about the areas where there were customer service complaints that were mentioned in the Solid Waste Management Plan?

A: Complaints to the County staff and number of petition requests are down. There have been improvements since last year. There were 2 areas that requested to be a sanitary district that did not have enough people to become a sanitary district.

From the County staff’s perspective, the big customer service issue recently is having trucks in neighborhoods too early. Residents will not tolerate trucks collecting waste prior to 6:00 a.m.

- Operational issues. According to the County Code, yard waste must be source separated and collected yearround. There has been a misunderstanding about brush, leaves and grass recycling. Yard debris consists of brush, leaves, and grass. An exemption to the yearround collection rule was granted for grass and leaves from December 24 to March 31 since the quantities generated are reduced. **Brush must be collected yearround.** March is a high tonnage month

in sanitary districts for separate brush collection. County staff collects brush on a call basis.

Some collectors do not collect brush even up to 6 inches.

The County needs to clarify what is brush and define it in the Code. With the amount of brush that is collected during the winter, does it justify running a brush collection route for half a truck of brush?

Is a separate route for yard waste always required? One company gave its working definition of brush that is “incidental to the load” as 2 bags per household. County staff did not agree with that threshold.

The County staff also needs to further define the size of brush that should be collected—6 inches or less in diameter was suggested.

What about seasonal yard waste collection? Could collectors skip separate yard waste collections during the summer? Several companies want to shorten the period for separate collection of yard waste. County staff will put this topic on the agenda to discuss at the next meeting in January.

#### Input from collectors about the Task Force

Clark Tyler of the SWTF attended the meeting to hear about the issues and ideas that collection companies have. Other members of the Task Force who also represent collection companies included John Hasle and Joan Carr.

Q: What about residents using biodegradable plastic bags?

A: Evidently customers are not using the bags because they are not as strong as regular trash bags. The bags also need to be exposed to sunlight and about 100 years to degrade.

A more significant problem is anticipated with the new no-rip plastic bags since they are stronger and could foul the debugging equipment even more.

Q: If a collection company has input for the SWTF, can we input through the website?

A: Yes, the email comes to the County’s Trashmail folder. Also, the Chamber of Commerce has a site for email to the Task Force.

Q: When is the next electronics recycling event?

A: The next recycling event for computers is November 13 at Herndon. Staff have also heard that electronics recycling will be available on October 23 at the Volunteer Fest in Providence District .

Office Depot also accepts computers for recycling. They shrink wrap and send about 2 truckloads weekly from most stores in the area.

- Q: Where will the next SWTF meeting be held?  
A: At the Group Decision Support Center in the Pennino Building at 7:00 p.m. on October 26.

### Sanitary Districts Announcements

County staff has mailed letters notifying residential collection companies about the upcoming public hearing on October 18, during which 52 households are asking to be added to sanitary districts.

- Q: Did all collection companies receive the letter?  
A: A letter was sent to residential collection companies only.

Collection companies were reminded that Permit packages need to be correct and complete because County staff uses them to provide information to residents such as in which companies serve in each zip code.

- Q: Why is the County in the waste collection business?  
A: The County has been there historically to offer an alternative to residents dissatisfied with private collection services. County staff understands the issues that collection companies have with the County being in the waste service.

- Q: Can collection companies be notified of all requests for sanitary district status if we give the County our customer lists of streets and homes currently served? Can those lists be kept confidential?  
A: No, any information that the County holds is public information and that is why the County ended its previous requirement to get customer lists. Anyone can request and obtain the lists through the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.

- Q: Does the County have various service levels?  
A: No, the County's service is once per week.

- Q: If a community is in a sanitary district, how do they get out?  
A: They get out the same way they got in by completing a petition process and going to a public hearing with the Board of Supervisors.

- Q: How many petitions have there been this year?  
A: Five during the spring and 5 during the current process.

### Collector issues

- Waits at I-66. One company stated that trucks sit on the scales too long waiting for a bay to open up at the I-66 Transfer Station. No County staff is assigning spaces and moving trucks quickly out of the bays. Only one weighmaster is in the scalehouse to operate 2 scales. The wait is worse between 10:00 to noon. After County staff became aware of the complaint last month, staff looked at the

weigh tickets to see how quickly the trucks moved through the facility. It appears that on average trucks to move through readily. The busiest times are very early in the morning and mid-day 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The County will continue to look at having enough staff helping with scale operations when there are waits. The County reallocates resources as we have them to keep lines down and move trucks through lines.

- Holiday schedules. Early closings create problems for collection companies. The only days the facilities close early are Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The County publishes the times during permitting season (May – June). The I-95 Complex remains open the latest on those days of all disposal facilities, should collectors want to take their loads directly there.
- Pick up times for commercial collection. Within 100 yards of a residential area, there are restrictions about how early and late waste can be collected. Changes to that are a noise issue, not a waste issue. Collection companies can raise this issue with the SWTF, but most residents would not want to expand the collection times earlier or later.
- Commercial Cash. If collection companies have commercial cash permits, they can use the Citizens' Disposal Facilities on Saturday after 2:00 on a cash basis. The County cannot invoice for that, so payment must be with cash or credit cards.
- Closing Time of Facilities. The I-66 Facility closes after 6:00 p.m. weekdays. This allows trucks to complete dumping of waste and reports to be finalized for the day.

Time for meetings. The companies present agreed that the next meeting on January 6, 2005 should again be held at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.